and move forward" and by adding without elaborating that "some steps would have to be taken to satisfy the concerns of the US Congress";

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether Government propose to obtain consensus on this issue by full discussion in Parliament during current session?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) Government has seen the remarks made by US Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice.

(b) Government is cognizant of fact that US Government would require approval of the US Congress to amend its laws suitably to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation with India. Hearings on this issue have been held in the US Congress, where US Government officials have made their presentations. US Government has explained the rationale behind the understanding on cooperation in civil nuclear energy with India, including its importance for strategic partnership with India. Government is confident that US Government would continue to address the concerns of the US Congress.

(c) The Government is committed to take the Parliament in confidence, as was reflected in Prime Minister's *suo moto* statement in Parliament on 29 July, 2005. The debate that followed in both the Houses of Parliament provided an occasion to discuss and clarify the issues involved in the civil nuclear understanding. The Government remains committed to keep the Parliament informed. Prime Minister in his Press Conference on 1 February, 2006 has stressed on the need for national consensus on this issue.

Visit of American Senator

429. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether American Senator John Kerry visited India and held talks with P.M. on bilateral issues, recently;

(b) if so, the details of issues discussed between both of them;

(c) the outcome thereof;

(d) whether the international issues of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal and Iran were also discussed in the meetings; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) to (c) US Senator John F. Kerry visited India in January, 2006 and called on the Prime Minister on 11 January, 2006. Issues pertaining to Indo-US bilateral relations and international issues came up for discussion during the call. Prime Minister shared his perspective on the economic reform process and the challenges and opportunities of an accelerated growth rate by the Indian economy. Matters pertaining to energy security came up in this context. Senator Kerry expressed great confidence in the future of Indo-US relations. He said that the implementation of the 18 July, 2005 understanding would serve the interests of both the countries. Indo-US cooperation in the field of agriculture and infrastructure were also covered during the call.

(d) and (e) Prime Minister expressed our continuing concerns at cross-border terrorism by organizations operating out of Pakistan. Iran's nuclear programme and its consideration by the IAEA was also touched upon. Prime Minister reiterated India's position on this matter. Afghanistan and Nepal were not discussed during the meeting.

Joint declaration by India and Saudi Arabia

430. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Saudi Arabia have issued a joint declaration during the State Visit of King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Prime Minister had held a wide range of discussions with King between specific ministers and officials;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the outcome thereon;